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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, December 23, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "AID FOR HOLIDAY CLOTHES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Only sad experience, ladies -- only bitter experience in the past would bring me to interrupting you on this busy day to mention clothes. But I have found that the wardrobe has a way of stealing a march on you at this busy season if you don't watch out. During all the preparations for Christmas, it is so easy to forget all about clothes. And then at the very last minute -- like as not on the night before Christmas, you may find a grease spot on the front of the dress you planned to wear to the Christmas party, or you'll notice how shiny and unpressed your husband's trousers look, or the children will report buttons missing and other clothing difficulties.

Memories of such situations have led me to the conclusion that one good way to prepare for a merry Christmas is to check over the family wardrobe before the eleventh hour, and fix garments that need it. Quick and effective ways to get your clothes in shape for the holidays -- they are what I want to tell you about today. And I might add that these clothing hints came from the Bureau of Home Economics.

Since grease spots are one of the common afflictions of clothes in most households, suppose I mention first how to remove a grease spot successfully without leaving an ugly ring. Three main points to remember are: First, always use a clean absorbent cloth or pad under the spot to take up the soil as it comes out. Second, apply your cleaning fluid to the wrong side of the garment. And, third, use very little fluid at a time, and work in from the outside of the spot. In other words, just dampen your cleaning-rag and then "feather" the fluid on. Give the spots several treatments if necessary. But never soak a cloth with liquid and then dab on the spot. You may cause a ring that looks worse than the spot you are trying to remove.

So much for grease spots. Now about the shine on Father's trousers. That comes from both wear and soil. The nap of the wool wears down and then dust and grime gets worn into the fabric. If the trousers are only slightly soiled, you can often remove the shine with just a good sponging and pressing. A drop or two of ammonia in the sponging water helps remove that shine too. Then press the trousers carefully using a damp cloth, a medium-hot iron, and a well-padded board.

By the way, that trio of equipment I just mentioned is good for pressing all wool clothes. A damp cloth, a medium-hot iron, and a well-padded board will rejuvenate a wool dress or skirt as well as men's clothes. Many a weary-looking garment will revive after a good brushing followed by a press. Cheesecloth makes a good pressing cloth for thin wool, but for thicker wool you will want muslin or some firmer material.



But now when you are pressing a silk dress, you will find that paper does a better job than cloth -- tissue paper. Place a whole sheet of tissue paper over the silk dress. You can dampen the paper or not, depending on how wrinkled the dress is. Sometimes you will find it a good idea to sponge a bit of water over the paper and then press. Silk given this treatment will usually come out with a very fresh new look. But be sure your iron is not too hot. An overheated iron can quickly scorch right through that tissue paper.

The dress you can't revive by a good press is your velvet frock. Steaming is the best home beauty-treatment for velvet. Steam takes out lines and wrinkles and brings back that youthful complexion. You can hang your dress over the spout of a steam kettle so the steam goes up inside the dress. That is one way to give it a steam bath. Or, if you have a shower bath in your home, that's another convenient place to steam a dress. Hang the dress on a hanger way up high where it won't touch anything, even the wall, and let it hang loose and free. Also be sure to hang it far enough away from the shower so that no drops of water will splash on it. (Steam is all right but not water, you see.) Then turn on the shower and let it fill the whole room with steam. The dress should not be touched or moved until it is dry after its steam bath.

Even hats are likely to be a bit soiled and dilapidated at this season. Many times a good brushing is all a felt hat needs. Then if you see a spot here or there, just try rubbing it off with a soft rubber eraser. If the spot is stubborn and does not erase, treat it to a rub with very fine steel wool or emery paper. The very soiled hat, of course, should have a bath in some grease solvent.

Now a little advance preparation for familiar holiday stains.

First, what to do about a spot of candlewax on table linen or clothes?

First, scrape or rub off all the wax that you can loosen. A paper knife with a dull edge or a spoon is a good scraper that won't injure the cloth. You can get a good deal of wax off just by rubbing the fabric between your hands.

The second step is to melt the wax out. Lay the cloth, right side down, on a piece of clean white blotting paper. Press over the spot on the wrong side with a warm iron. Then move it to a clean spot on the blotting paper and press again. Keep this up until no more melted wax appears on the blotter.

Even after this, you are likely to have a greasy looking stain left. So your next step is to sponge the spot with a cloth dampened with a grease solvent. Any good grease solvent is all right. I always mention carbon tetrachloride because it is such a safe liquid to have around the house -- is not inflammable as most of the others are. Well, lay your spot on an absorbent cloth and gently sponge with a clean cloth dampened with the fluid, working from the outside edge of the spot in. Use a cloth dampened but not wet with the liquid. And treat the spot several times if necessary.

If these 3 steps don't avail, if you still have a spot, try rubbing a little lard on the spot. That ought to get the wax. Then sponge off the lard with your cleaning fluid.

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